STRESS MANAGEMENT AND
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Harry, Joy
Department of Management,
Faculty of Business Studies,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, P.M.B, 5047,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between stress management and employee performance. The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of stress, management, workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, effectiveness, efficiency and commitment on employee performance. The study analyzed the literature review, theoretical framework as, well as empirical studies by other authors from which the conceptual framework was built. The study was set to be informed by the role theory effect. This study thus concluded that stress management bears a positive and significant influence on employee performance. We recommend that management should design task and jobs in ways that would make for effective, efficiency and commitment and bring about improvement in the performance of their workforce and that flexible job schedules should be incorporated into human resource management strategies, policies and plan to enhance easy employee performance and commitment that will increase organizational survival.

Keywords: stress management, employee performance

1. Purposes of Community Colleges in Adult Education

As a manager, the first responsibility is to become effective. The second is to maintain that effectiveness, in the maintenance of managerial effectiveness, stress is an increasingly significant threat. This is not new to the manager, but there are at least three reasons for a new and enlightened concern.

First, over the years, the nature of disease and disorder has changed, chronic diseases are now the principal contributors to morbidity and mortality and each day new evidence reveals the relationship of stress to chronic disease.

Second reason is the issue of change and adoption. An organization must respond continuously to a changing environment. They adjust, adopt, attempt to find new structures and new policies to meet changing constraints and opportunities, the

need to adopt induces stress, and when organizations are under stress, managers are stress.

The third factor is what management jobs have become more complex - more difficult because, because of global changes. Such changes include the following;

1) The coming of the horizontal society;
2) The building of what is public and private;
3) The need for systems thinking, system action.

These and other changes forebode more uncertainty and ambiguity in the future. They also require adjustment and adaptation, with resultant stress. For managers and organization, the issue of stress has many dimensions. The most obvious is simply health and longevity. The personal tragedy in premature death is obvious. Corporate loss is also significant. Many managers, having just risen to the point of assuming key positions, die of coronary heart disease. Thus, the bench strength dies on the brink of making its most significant contributions, an organization must learn to nurture and be vigilant of such valuable resources. They must respond to stress-related issues, should managers have annual medical check-ups? Do you know what they should know about alcoholism, nutrition, exercise and stress? Do they know how to survive in this time of our economic recession facing Nigeria?

The effect of stress on the performance of the employee's job is one of the biggest problems facing us now, and this occurs in our everyday society. To the organization, employees are the most workforce that is working longer hours, as the rising levels of responsibilities requiring them to exert themselves, even more strenuously to meet rising expectations about job performance. In view of this fact, the style and level of the competition that we face had led to the level of stress faced by employees.

Most employees who work in the city and live outside the city face a lot of stress from their home to place of work have compound stress because of traffic, Mostly in Port Harcourt where a lot of flyovers are being constructed. Among other factors are the financial crisis and economic recession facing Nigerians.

Most organization that is going through the issue of restructuring because of its efficiency and effectiveness in order to ultimately utilized the resources had created employee low performance, as such, result to stress, among other issues are layoffs, dismissing and mergers to maintain the organization position in the market place. According to O'Meara (2008) stress is described as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of their demands being made on them. More so, Swineposes (1998) said that work related stress has been a topic that has recurred increasing attention, in the area of occupational health, over last years.

One of the things that cause stress is the demand for employee growth, other factors could be traced to the interpersonal relationship and use of free time. Therefore, stress can be adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of his or her inability to cope with the demands required.

Sager (1994) defined employee stress as a psychological state perceived by individuals when faced with demands, constraints, and opportunities that have important but uncertain outcomes. When we talk about employee stress, we mean the

reaction toward work in an organization. This is not the same as the general stress. (Cohen, & Silverthorne, 2008) said that stress can produce adverse consequence, and increase turnover intentions (Cameron, Blodgett & Barnes, 1996). It is noted that stress is not necessarily bad; it is an opportunity what it offers potential gain, but whatever its nature, it usually begins when individuals are placed in a work environment that is incompatible with their work style and or temperament. It becomes aggravated when individuals find out that they have or can exercise little control over it. According to Henry & Evans (2008) the most employee faces stress according to most doctors and this has a negative impact on the productivity of an employee.

What then is stress? Stress has been defined as a non-specific response by the body to readjust. Some people readjust well physically and mentally with circumstances. Many of us, get upset or flustered over things. This affects your system, your day and your lifestyle.

Mcshane & Hurrell (2001) defined stress as "*an individual's adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being*". Also, Colo (2002) state that pressure comes in all individuals but the ability to deal with it is what manifests as stress. Stress is, therefore, a reaction to a situation that can have a positive or negative effect. It is the individual's perception of the situation that determines whether the pressure is a challenge or threat.

We will say that stress is when you ignore physical, mental and spiritual warning signs. Your mind and body are telling you.

Finally, the stress can be used in physical and now in psychology basically means that human being is inclined to resist the external forces acting upon them like other physical objects and bodies. The pressure an employee faces has a positive import; it helps in the performance.

2. Conceptual Framework
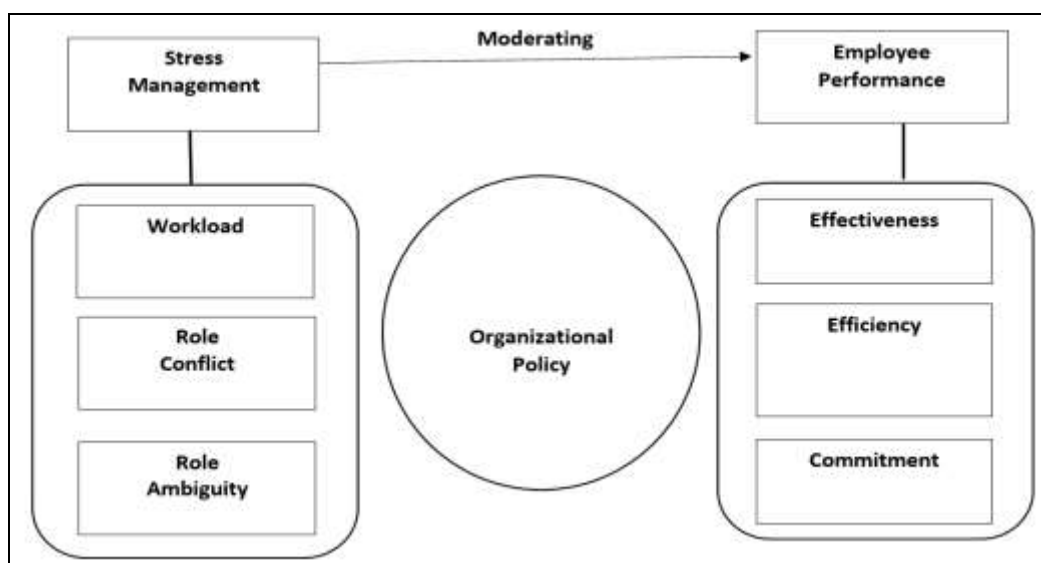
Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework on stress management and employee performance
(Source: Developed by the researcher, 2019)

The conceptual framework has the dependent and independent variables, from this study, we have three of various dimensions of stress management and employee performance. In the literature that was adopted, these are workload, role conflict, role ambiguity. On the other hand, we have employee performance which include effectiveness, efficiency and commitment.

2.2 Aim and Objectives

The objective of this study is to look at the impact of stress management on employee performance. In this time of our economic recession, most organizations fail to be socially responsible and identify how important human resources are and ignore employee. This causes a negative effect on employee performance.

a) to determine the relationship between stress management and employee performance;
b) to determine the relationship between workload and effectiveness;
c) to determine the relationship between role conflict and efficiency;
d) to determine the relationship between role ambiguity and commitment.

2.3 Statement of Problem

One of the major challenges confronting managers in Nigeria is how to improve employee performance. The performance of some employee is very low and this has become so worrisome to managers in these organization. The poor performance of these organization could be traceable to the workforce. Hence this paper will examine the concept of employee performance and its measure (effectiveness, efficiency and commitment) and tries to examine the relationship between stress management and employee performance.

2.4 Scope of the Study

Content-wise, the study focuses on stress management and employee performance. It covers the key construct such as the dimensions of stress, management (workload, role conflict and role ambiguity) and measures of employee performance (effectiveness, efficiency and commitment). The relationship between stress management and employee performance as the main focus of the study.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative research approach where secondary data were used as the main source of data collection. The secondary data were collected from published materials such as textbooks, journals, articles, seminar papers and periodicals. The data collected from secondary sources were used to confirm and support the argument put forward in this paper, deductions were made from the theoretical and empirical review.

3.1 Conceptual Review

3.1.1 Concept of Stress Management

Most managers understand stress, intuitively. It is usually an emotional discomfort accompanied by feelings of not being able to cope, that things are falling apart, that one is not in control or it may be just a general unease that all is not well, within an apparent cause. At the physical level, it includes loss of appetite, sleeplessness, sweating, ulcers and other signs and symptoms.

In general, stress is the body's preparing itself for activity, without the activity following. As a consequence, the body system is thrown out of balance. Excess acid is secreted in the stomach. Adrenalin appears in the blood, heart rates increase and other inappropriate reactions of chronic psychological preparation for action, without the action, leads to disease and disorder. Stress, when is fundamentally a psychophysiological phenomenon, it has to do with our feeling and emotions and the way our bodies react to them.

Cole (2002) described stress as "*the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of their being unable to cope with the demands being made on them*".

Mcshane & Hurrell (2001) defined stress as "*an individual's adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or hreatening to the person's well-being*".

3.1.2 Dimensions of Stress Management

Stress management is a multi-dimensional construct. It takes various forms which include workload and role ambiguity. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is on workload, role conflict and role ambiguity. These dimensions of stress, management are discussed in detail below.

3.1.3 Workload

Workload refers to the concentration or the amount of assignment and tasks, which employee responsible at work (Ali, Raheem, Nawaz, & Imamuddin, 2014). This aspect refers to the degree of stress experienced by individuals due to the conception that they are unable to adopt or be active with the amount of work assigned to them. (Idris, & Dollard, 2011). The classification of the workload is role overload and role lower load. Role overload is when an individual is expected to do over than available time, resources and their capabilities, individuals face many expectations from the direct boss, subordinates, colleagues and top management (Trayambak, Abbasi, & Janjua, 2016).

3.1.4 Role lower load

Is when a task of duties of the role are less than the level of individual capabilities which generates bared feeling or stress, tenses and fear, not lead their expected duties, and in the second they feel small work or lack of its importance, by so doing their job performance will be affected.

3.1.5 Role Conflict

According to Zhao, & Rashid (2010) stated that role arises when more demands have been taken place upon the individual by the peers, supervisors and subordinates. This type of stress is seen in the jobs which have a lack of descriptions or unclear descriptions and it requires conceptual thinking and decision making.

Perrewé, Rosen, & Maslach (2012) states that role conflict refers to incompatible requirements and expectations that the employee receives from their supervisor or co-worker. Amadi, whom an individual must interact hold conflicting expectations about that individual's behaviour.

3.1.6 Role Ambiguity

Malik, N. (2011) stated that the employees became ambivalent to predict their supervisor's reactions to their tasks as "*success*" or as "*failure*" (Karasek, Karimi, & Alipour, 2000). Beehr & Bhagat (1992) stated that role ambiguity is another factor that leads to job stress. This occurs in a situation where expectations, responsibilities and objectives, have not been clearly designed by the employer to the employee.

3.2 Concept of Employee Performance

Employee performance is the ability to achieve the set objectives within the required timelines and parameters (Yusuf, Muhammed, & Kazeem, 2014). Having regards to employee performance. Sundi (2013) proposed five primary criteria that could be used to measure performance, example: work quality, individual relationship, timeliness and work independence.

A lot of researchers focused on the relationship linking job performance and satisfaction in the area of organizational psychology and found out that the employee's performance depended on employee's satisfaction. This indicated that great employee performance can be achieved by a high level of job satisfaction. Yahaya, Yahaya, Tamyes, Ismail, & Jaalam (2010) concluded that for the employees to remain motivated as well as to boost their jobs satisfaction, the employers should provide a good environment.

3.3 Dimensions of Employee Performance

Employee performance can be measured using various criteria. For instance (Ashley, 2019) measuring employee performance using effectiveness. Ogboso & Amah (2002) using efficiency, Bronwyn (2018) and commitment Buchanan (1974).

3.3.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to how their workers behave in the workplace and how well they perform the job duties you have obligated to them. Companies typically set, performance targets for individual employees and the company as a whole in hopes that your business offers good value to customers to minimize waste and operate efficiently (Ashley, 2002).

According to Khattak (2011) stated that stress puts drastic effects on the employee. Employees in stress cannot meet the expectation of their organization. Because of facing physical, psychological and organizational burnouts (Ishmael, & Hong, 2011). Describe that employees in a service organization are subjected to a high degree of work-related stress, which is the major reasons for employee's poor performance at the job. Job stress affects negatively on the female employee's well-being which creates dissatisfaction and negative emotions towards work and ultimately their performance decreases.

3.3.2 Effectiveness

This is a broad concept that is difficult to measure in an organization. According to Ogboso & Amah (2014). The concept of organizational effectiveness is an elusive one that there is no single way of defining it. This may be due to too many criteria used and the many definitions available for the concept. (Veldsman, 1982) defined organizational effectiveness as a qualification attached to an organization resulting from the comparison from the actual state of the entity against its ideal state. He posits that an organization can either be effective or ineffective. Effective organization are built on an effective individual who works effectively in groups (Lawler & Zanzi, 1972).

3.3.3 Efficiency

Ogboso, et al. (2014) opines that efficiency refers to the accomplishment of goals with minimum resources or waste, it includes measures such as time minimization, cost minimization, and waste minimization. Speed and time are important resources for any organization and must be seen to seek to maximize speed and minimize time. The way an organization does this indicates time-efficient and productivity, they are' speed, time and motion. Studies since the day of scientific management introduced by Taylor that led to management efficiency.

3.3.4 Commitment

Several attempts have been made to define "*employee commitment*" perhaps the most comprehensive of those definitions is that of Meyer, Stanley, & Parfyonova (2012) who define commitment using a multi-dimension approach and consider it to have affective, continuance and normative perspective. The affective dimension of commitment refers to an emotional attachment to involvement with an organization, continuance commitment denotes the perceived cost of leaving an organization; and normative commitment refers to the felt responsibility to support and remain a manner of an organization. Thus it can be discerned from definition such as the one above, that employee commitment is a bond between the employee and the organization such that he/she (the employee) wants to continue serving the organization and to help it achieve its objectives.

4. Operational Framework
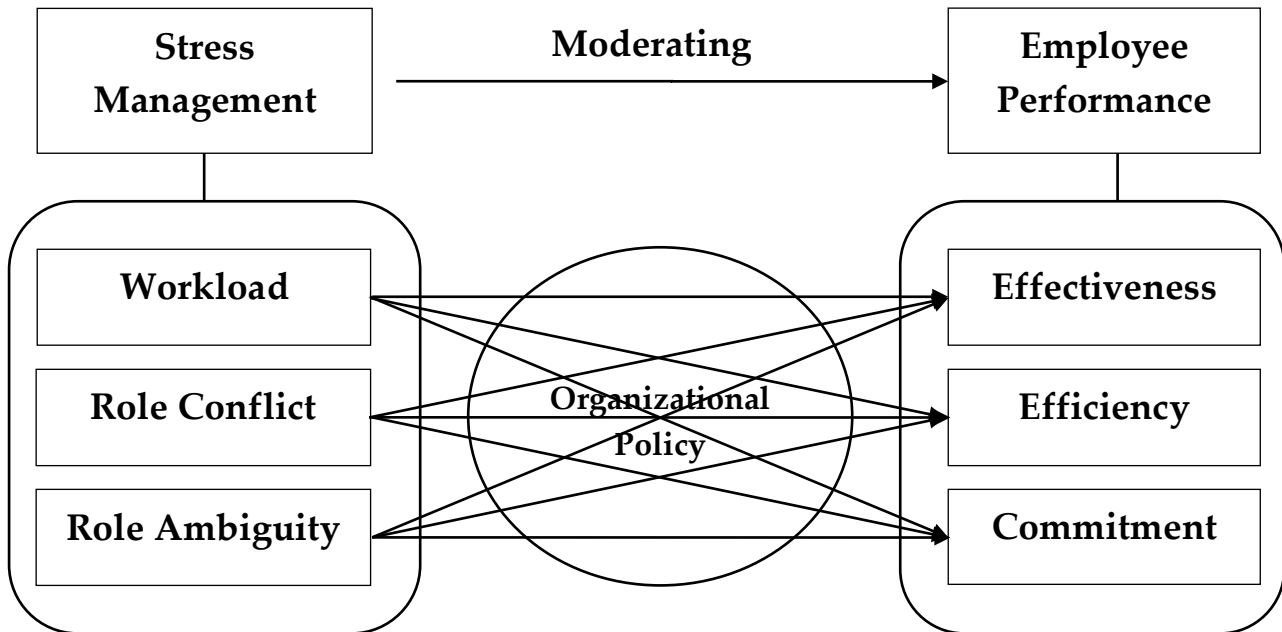
Figure 2: Operational Framework of the relationship between stress
management and employee performance (Source: Desk Research, 2019)

4.1 Workload and Effectiveness

Managing workload is a major path to increased performance/productivity. The smart organization thus always look for things to effectively manage workload and improve performance. An effective workload management strategy helps in determining priorities, calculate the degree of urgency, the usage of guidelines and procedures, attend to the risk of inaction, reduce stress and augment of a healthy work-life balance.

4.2 Workload and Efficiency

Organization face a trade-off between high utilization and responsiveness. High utilization can improve financial performance but causes congestion, which increases throughout time. Employees may manage this trade-off by reducing processing times during periods of high workload, resulting in an inverted U-shaped. The organization should follow a strong planning process and calculate accurate estimation by keeping all strength and weaknesses in mind. A successful plan based on current fact and future estimation gives the management of beforehand edge in deciding the work distribution. Moreover, it prepares them for any unwanted circumstance. Therefore, the workload distribution on the ground of a solid plan helps both the managers and employee to assign and execute tasks efficiently.

4.3 Workload and Commitment

There has been an established fact that there is a link between workload and workers commitment. In fact, Dewe (1992) reported that workload is frequently one of the most

stressful aspects of the workplace. One of the antecedents to emotional exhaustion and tedium identified by researchers is workload (Moore & Fuhrer, 1995).

4.3 Role Ambiguity and Effectiveness

Classical role theory (Kahn et al., 1964) defined role ambiguity as to the lack of information available to perform one's responsibilities effectively. More recently, researchers (Yun, Takeuchi, Marginson, 2006) have found role ambiguity to be associated with a lack of information on goals, a condition in which the job is to be performed, responsibilities and duties to perform one's job effectively. Bray, & Whaley, (2001) found that an individual's belief in his or her capabilities to perform effectively in a role influence employee performance effectiveness.

4.4 Role Ambiguity and Efficiency

As a major element in the social learning theory of Bandura (1977) efficiency refers to the belief in somebody competent to perform a specific task. Researches have contended that reducing efficiency may induce job relation strain (Brief and Aday, 1981; Stumpt, Kahn, & Long, 1987), argued that a larger number of individuals that believes their performances are uncontrollable, that is high role ambiguity imply a lower efficiency among them. Bray (1998) also suggested that role ambiguity may be negatively related to efficiency for the following reasons (Li and Bagger, 2008) first, role ambiguity diminishes the quality of the information available to evaluate correctly an individual's ability to perform a task. Secondly, according to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), achieving a high level of efficiency requires that an individual can visualize one's performance, ultimately reading one's confidence in their ability to perform effectively. Clearly, role ambiguity may negatively affect an employee's self-efficiency.

4.5 Role Ambiguity and Commitment

In an organization, newcomers who receive fewer programs experience a higher level of role ambiguity are statistically predictor of commitment. And those who have this are likely to be less committed to the organization. Most recent empirical research found that role ambiguity is related to employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment (Bettencourt and Brown, 2003; Harris, Artis, Walters, & Licata, 2006).

When encountering role ambiguity, employees need to find out ways to deal with these stressors and ensure their in-role performance. Their attitude will change to consider their own interest rather than serving the best interest of their organization. To be more specific employee encountering role ambiguity will experience dissonance, and such uncomfortable feelings, inspire negative reciprocity. Thus, employee decreases their commitment to the organization.

4.6 Role Conflict and Effectiveness

Kahn, & Wolfe (1978) reported that the effect of role conflict include low job satisfaction, high level of tensions and ineffectiveness, House, & Rizzo (1972) added reduced organizational effectiveness and increased tendency to quit to list of negative side

effects of role conflict Schwab, & Iwanicki (1982) found that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization linked role conflict and burnout. The level of stress arising from role conflict has a significant influence on the effectiveness with which some employee manages their job activities. Multiple roles performed by some employee result to the conflict which may be stressful for them and this may be stressful for them and this may affect the way they control things in an organization.

4.7 Role Conflict and Efficiency

Concerning role conflict specifically, the greater the role conflict among the employee in an organization, the less efficient is the organization and the less satisfied are those working in it. Role conflict that is both an integral part of the work environment and a real phenomenon related to people who work in the same work environment on a daily basis. The importance of role conflict allows their detection and deepening of knowledge of their origins, as sources of job satisfaction and consequently as important factors leading to poor productivity and low performance of an organization. It would be constructive for the managers to introduce organizational interventions covering all the employees, adopting a team-oriented approach, designed to reduce ways of managing things.

4.8 Role Conflict and Commitment

When an employee faces role conflict, their level of commitment towards the organization will be reduced. (Judah, & Hwang, (2011). observed that indeed role conflict have a significant negative relationship towards affective and continuance commitment. It can be said that employers do not show respect, nor understanding the ideas, opinion, views of employees forced them to be in the role conflict. However, role conflict, always leads to absenteeism, turnover and lower productivity, producing a poor quality of products, job dissatisfaction and negative employee performance.

Apart from the above explanations, what most prominent situation of role conflict is two or more expectation contradicted at a time as a result of inadequate defensive and supportive communication climate.

5. Theoretical Review

5.1 The Role Theory Effect

In order to fulfil expected service, most western economics have undergone major organizational restructuring and redefinition of professional rules (Briggs, 1997). One of the basic premises of the role theory is that various job roles that individuals engage in may be stressed regardless of their actual occupation, suggesting that stress found in various work roles may be stressful for all workers.

Osipow, and Spokane (1987) described six work roles that they felt were stressful regardless of an individual's actual vocation, these six roles are:
  a) Role ambiguity;
  b) Role insufficiency;

c) Role overload;
d) Role boundary;
e) Role responsibility, and
f) Physical environment. (Osipow, & Spokane, 1987).

Imtiaz, & Ahmad (2009) carried research on the impact of stress on employee performance and identified the factors affecting stress as personal issue, lack of administrator support, lack of acceptance for work done, low span over the work environment, unpredictability in work environment and inadequate monetary reward.

Bewell, Yakubu, Owotunse, & Ojih, (2014) examined work-induced stress and its relationship to organizational effectiveness and performance are relatively inseparable and challenged the various organization in Nigeria to employ the service of organizational and clinical psychologists to help in providing stress coping skill, coaching and counselling to employees as it will help to boast various organization in Nigeria.

Manzoor (2012) carried out a research investigating the impact of work stress on job performance through a case study on textile sector of Faisalabad and their results showed that the stress levels among employees in textile sector of Faisalabad is high in certain areas like work overload and long work hours, effect on family life, pressure at work, job insecurity and physical agents. However, this kind of stress is not affecting the performance of the employee. They conclude that there is no relationship between job stress and employee performance.

5.2 Gap in Knowledge
Since the research was done within a particular independent variable, there is a need to further study other independent variables that affect employee performance.

7. Summary

The findings of this study corroborate what previous research was concluded on how flexible work schedule in an organization influenced employee commitment and generally found positive relations. There is continuous interest from other researchers to study flexible work as it has been advocated as a means of increasing employee performance. Flexible work creates favourable impacts on employee's wellbeing and reducing work-family conflict.

8. Conclusion

Stress is at the centre of several challenges bedevilling employee in the workplace, it cannot be eliminated hence the need to manage it to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce, organization should ensure that their work environment is in order, jobs are designed to accommodate employee and policies that make for flexibility in workplace should be put in place.

8.1 Recommendations

1) Management should design tasks and jobs in ways that would make for effectiveness and efficiency and bring about improvement in the performance of their workforce.

2) It is recommended that flexible job schedules should be incorporated into human resource management strategies, policies and plan to enhance easy employee performance and commitment that will increase organization survival.

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